



June 2005

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Gillmor Washington Update

As your Representative in Congress, I am proud to represent Ohio's Fifth Congressional District in Washington, DC.

In order to keep the citizens of the Fifth District better informed and up to date on my activities in Washington, DC and back home in Ohio, I have published the June edition of my monthly newsletter. It is my goal to provide you with the information you need to stay informed on the issues important to Ohio. In this edition of my Monthly Update, I have focused on the important events that have taken place in the month of May and inform you of upcoming June events in the Fifth District. I hope that you will find this information beneficial. Please contact me should you have any questions or comments.

Introducing the House Democracy Assistance Commission

In May, House Speaker J. Dennis Hastert named me to the newly formed House Democracy Assistance Commission. As the sole Ohioan and only one of only 16 members to the Commission to support emerging democracies worldwide, I am honored to have the opportunity to help parliaments of emerging democracies.

Upon the passage of House Resolution 135, of which I was an original cosponsor, the Democracy Assistance Commission was formed to work with the parliaments of select countries and share the expertise of the United States Congress. The sixteen members of the bipartisan Commission will employ our experience and insight to assist developing democracies.

Among the areas of assistance and advice which the Commission will provide are: committee operations, budgetary issues, defense, specialized legislation, proce-



Rep. Gillmor listens to Speaker Hastert as the House Democracy Assistance Commission is announced. Also pictured are Rep. David Dreier (2nd from left) and Rep. David Price (left of Rep. Gillmor)

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dures, research, information and constituent services.

This is a way to provide advice to countries just starting democracies. Our nation has proven that, democracy works. Recent elections and democratic action in Afghanistan, Ukraine, Georgia and Iraq confirm the power of government as Lincoln viewed it, 'of the people, by the people, for the people'. This effort will again spread the goodwill of the American people worldwide and to the countries and people most in need.

In its first year, the Democracy Assistance Commission will partner with five selected countries: East Timor, Georgia, Indonesia, Kenya and Macedonia. Special consideration will also be given to Afghanistan, Iraq, Lebanon and Ukraine after democratic elections are complete and parliaments have been seated. In future years, additional parliaments will be added.

Presiding over the U.S. House of Representatives

In May, I was honored to twice serve as Speaker Pro Tempore of the United States House of Representatives. At the request of House Speaker J. Dennis Hastert, I presided over the House during passage of legislation to fund the Department of Homeland Security as well as legislation to fund Veterans Services.



Congressman Gillmor is shown presiding over the House of Representatives as Speaker Pro Tempore

The FY 2006 Military Quality of Life, Veterans Affairs, and related Agencies Appropriations Bill passed the United States House of Representatives by a vote of 425 to 1. The Appropriations Bill approved \$85.2 billion for the operations and activities of veterans programs including: health care, disability compensation, pensions, readjustment benefits, employment and training, education, housing and memorial affairs. Veterans' health-

care will receive a bump of \$1.64 billion or a 9% increase in 2006. This increase comes on top of a 9% increase received in 2005. Among the increased funding for the Veterans Health Administration is an additional \$100 million for mental health programs. Veterans' mental health programs will receive a total of \$2.2 billion in 2006.

I also presided over the House during debate of the FY 2006 Homeland Security Appropriations Bill which passed the U.S. House by a vote of 424 to 1. This Appropriations Bill approved \$30.85 billion for the operations and activities of the Department of Homeland Security in 2006. Among the many provisions provided in the Homeland Security Appropriations Bill are: expansion of cargo inspection at foreign ports, improved technology to screen high-risk cargo, continuing to enhance security for ports,

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rails and aviation, and develop secure communications systems with federal, state and local entities.

The Speaker's floor assistant Karen Haas said that Congressman Gillmor is part of a "core group" of Members which Speaker Hastert relies upon. "Mr. Gillmor is certainly one of those members we can count on to do an effective job of sitting in for the Speaker during House proceedings," said Haas.

Retaining the 180th was the "Right Decision"

Last month, the base closing list was submitted today by Defense Secretary Rumsfeld to the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) Commission. While many bases across America will be realigned or closed, the Toledo Air National Guard Base will actually gain in manpower and responsibility.

Over time, the BRAC process has become much less 'political'. However, I have always felt that stressing the support of our community for the 180th was essential to the future of the Base. As the BRAC process geared up, I toured the Toledo Guard Base and sent letters to Defense Secretary Rumsfeld and the BRAC Commission in support of our facility. I also attended meetings in Washington with Defense Deputy Undersecretary Philip Grone and General Dan James, Director of the Air National Guard.



The airmen at the Toledo Guard Base have fought admirably in operations across the globe. They have defended our nation at home and provided vital support and leadership to our area. I am proud of the work they have always done and am confident that keeping our Base in Toledo was the right decision.

The BRAC Commission must now review the base closure list and send the closure list to the President by September 8th. Facilities can be added or removed between now and September 8th at which time the base closure list will be complete. The President must certify the Commission list by November 7th at which time Congress will have 45 days in which to pass a motion of disapproval or the entire list becomes law.

Justice Department's Proposed Sex Offender Database Is Not Enough

The Department of Justice has announced the creation of a national sex offender database. Unfortunately, the proposed database is good, but does not go far enough to protect Americans.

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The sex offender database proposed by the Justice Department is a good first step in protecting Americans but it is not the final step. In the Department's proposed database, states must volunteer to include their information. Some states do not have online registries while the information provided on those that do is often inconsistent. For example, some states provide pictures of offenders while others do not. Some states provide searchable area maps based on your actual address while others only let you search in your zip code, if at all. Every American deserves the same consistent access to this information and you should be given the most information possible.

More than a dozen years after the implementation of the World Wide Web, it is reassuring that the Department of Justice will at long last create a national sex offender database. But to finally create this online database and stop short of complete access and implementation defeats the purpose. After the recent tragedies in Florida, it should be inconceivable to provide anything less than unfettered access to this information, anytime and anywhere.

In January, I introduced H.R. 95 with Rep. Earl Pomeroy (D-ND), entitled the National Sex Offender Registry Act. My legislation would use existing law enforcement records submitted by State Attorneys General under the Jacob Wetterling Crimes Against Children and Sexually Violent Offender Registration Act to create a national sex offender database. States, which do not comply, will lose funds totaling 25% of those allocated to them by the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994. In turn, the states that do comply will receive additional funds forfeited by those non-compliant states.

I do not believe it should be necessary to receive an edict from Congress for such a commonsense request. However, providing as much information as possible is the most important means to empower every person to protect themselves and their loved ones. If the Justice Department's proposal does not create a mandatory, comprehensive nationwide database, I will continue to press for federal legislation in Congress.

Making Access to Health Care a National Priority

America's health care system provides some of the finest doctors and more access to vital medications than any country in the world. And yet, our system has been faltering for many years with the increased cost of health care. Premiums have risen substantially and access to quality coverage has fallen. Today, over 45 million Americans have no health care coverage. While the State of Ohio fares better than the nation as a whole, over 1.3 million of our friends and neighbors lack any type of health care coverage. The lack of health care coverage has remained very important to me during my time in Congress and as a member of the House Subcommittee on Health, I am working hard with my colleagues to correct these inequalities.

The U.S. House of Representatives has implemented several health care reforms in the 109th Congress to provide coverage to the uninsured. Among the many health care related priorities of the House are:

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Health Savings Accounts, Community Health Centers, Medicaid Reform Initiatives, Medical Liability Reform, and Association Health Plans. Health Savings Accounts (HSA's) have been made available to millions of Americans to provide a tax-free way to save money to pay for medical expenses. The money placed in these accounts does not face state, local, or federal taxes and is exempt from social security and Medicare taxes, allowing it to grow quicker to pay for routine expenses or future medical needs. In the past six months, 37% of individuals opening HAS's were previously uninsured and in addition, 27% of the policies purchased by small businesses were used for employees who were previously unemployed.



Community Health Centers have also extended health care coverage to an additional 3 million Americans as part of a plan to fund 1,200 new or expanded sites to serve 6.1 million people. In the past four years, access to these health care centers has increased by almost 30% with more than 600 centers delivering preventative and primary care to patients in underserved communities across America. Of these new or expanded Community Health Centers, two are located in the Fifth District, in both Fremont and Willard.



As the U.S. House and Senate consider next year's budget, we also have the opportunity to improve our nation's Medicaid program. Medicaid is a vital safeguard for America's most needy citizens but inefficiencies in the system are leading to inadequacies in coverage. Skyrocketing Medicaid costs have put a great strain on government revenues. In Ohio, Medicaid expenditures account for over 40% of the state's general revenue spending and is larger than the state's entire 1987 budget. Congress must work with our governors to transform our system into

one of personal responsibility, quality and efficiency, for our citizens that need it the most.

Lastly, Association Health Plans (AHP) will allow small businesses the opportunity to join together through existing associations to purchase health insurance for their workers at a reduced cost. The implementation of AHP's will provide 7.5 million people with insurance, including 600,000 newly insured people. Each of these provisions passed by the House will lead to increased coverage and access to quality and affordable health care in America. I remain committed to the success of these programs and am hopeful that the Senate will provide the attention they deserve.

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Edon Minister Serves as House's Guest Chaplain

In May, Rev. Daniel P. Gallagher from the Edon Church of Christ served as the Guest Chaplain for the U.S. House of Representatives. Rev. Gallagher gave the opening prayer to begin the legislative session of the House of Representatives.

In a tradition which began during the Continental Congress, the U.S. House has opened each day of session with a prayer. In fact, we have employed a House Chaplain since 1789. It is quite an honor to serve as Guest Chaplain for a day and Rev. Gallagher performed wonderfully. From the House floor, I remarked that Rev. Gallagher continued a great tradition by offering his leadership and guidance to our beloved institution.

In his opening prayer, Rev. Gallagher said, "I ask of you Lord to help guide these men and women to make decisions that will make this country better and stronger, not just in the physical sense but in the spiritual as well." He continued, "Help these leaders to keep their eyes focused on your desires and make this country what you intended her to be when you first brought people to its shores to be a light on a hill for all the world to see."

To view a copy of Rev. Gallagher's opening prayer or my speech from the House floor, please visit www.house.gov/gillmor.



Rev. Daniel Gallagher (center) is presented a proclamation from J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House, by Congressman Paul Gillmor and House Chaplain Daniel Coughlin

Defiance College Receives \$248,000 Federal Grant



Congressman Gillmor views student progress at Defiance College

The U.S. Department of Education recently approved a \$248,000 grant for Defiance College. The grant will be distributed from the Directed Grants Program and will be available from May 2005 through June 30, 2006.

These funds, made available by Congress, will be used to create a dedicated science lab at Defiance College. This lab will allow the College to expend its curriculum to create the fo-

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rensic science classes necessary for program accreditation. In order to achieve program accreditation, Defiance College must meet the following objectives: purchase and install all forensic science lab equipment; have the labs operational by the fall of 2007; and develop the classes and complete successful accreditation of the forensic science major.

The continual evolution of science and its use in fighting crime makes programs such as that at Defiance College vital. The ability to provide top notch education such as at Defiance College is important to the nation as a whole. I will continue working to ensure that other colleges and universities have access to these types of funds.

Three District Projects In House Energy and Water Appropriations Bill

After the U.S. House of Representatives passed the Energy and Water Development Appropriations Act in May, I called officials in Fulton County, the City of Norwalk, and the Village of Ottawa to inform them that \$300,000 was included for each of their wastewater projects in the Fifth District. The legislation, which funds the Corps of Engineers, Bureau of Reclamation, National Nuclear Security Administration and numerous energy supply and conservation programs, included \$900,000 for Fifth District projects including:

- \$300,000 to create an area-wide sewer system for the entire Elmira/Burlington area. The sewer system will collect and transport wastewater to an existing wastewater treatment facility.
- \$300,000 to the City of Norwalk for major improvements at the Wastewater Treatment Plant. These improvements include doubling the capacity of the headworks and primary treatment facilities, modifying the flow equalization basin, increasing sludge handling and storage, providing necessary control and monitoring and replacing deteriorated facilities.
- \$300,000 to the Village of Ottawa for the Bluffton Regional Waterline. The waterline will provide Villages in the area surrounding Ottawa the opportunity to tap into the water system. The project will promote economic development and provide quality water to the residents in the region.

In these tight budget times, it is increasingly important to focus our resources on protecting public health and welfare. These monies will help the people of the Fifth District long into the future.



Congressman Gillmor meets with students and parents from Norwalk St. Paul Schools

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The Energy and Water Development Appropriations Act passed the U.S. House this week by a vote of 416 to 13. It awaits passage in the U.S. Senate and a possible conference committee before it can be sent to President Bush for his signature.

Gillmor Staff Coming to Woodville and Pemberville in June

One of my goals as Congressman is to make sure that casework services are readily available to all my constituents. Unfortunately, the size of our sixteen county district makes travel to my Defiance, Tiffin, or Norwalk offices prohibitive for many. In order to ensure that my staff is accessible to all my constituents, I have scheduled casework onsites in Sandusky and Wood Counties as follows:

Wednesday, June 29, 2005

9:30 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.

Village of Woodville
Woodville Town Hall
219 West Main Street

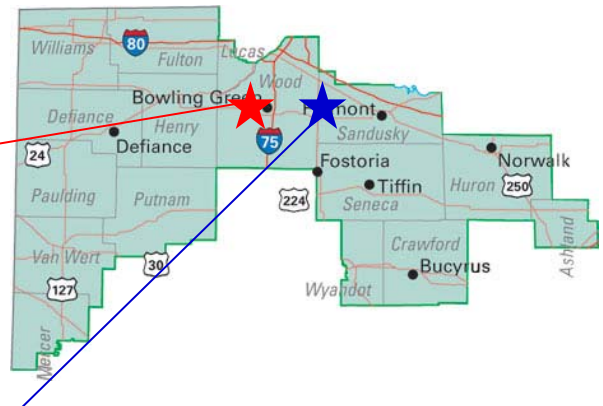
WOODVILLE

Wednesday, June 29, 2005

11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Village of Pemberville
Pemberville Town Hall
Council Chambers
115 Main Street

PEMBERVILLE



If you are in the area, I encourage you to stop by and my staff will be happy to assist you with any problems you are having with the federal government.

Contact Me

If you have any suggestions on topics you would like to see addressed in my monthly updates, require any additional information, or would like to inform me of your views on matters concerning the federal government, please contact me anytime in Washington, D.C. or in any of my Ohio offices.

If you wish to forward your questions or concerns via U.S. mail, please address your correspondence to one of my Ohio offices as mail sent to the Longworth House Office Building in Washington is subject to a lengthy screening process and may not reach my office in a timely manner. You will find additional information on issues of federal concern on my website at <http://gillmor.house.gov>.